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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 003795

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DEPT FOR AF/E AND AF A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: Somalia: Gedi/Yusuf Tensions Intensify

Ref: Nairobi 3664

Classified by Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Arrests, detentions, and firings marked the latest developments in the growing tension between Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Gedi as dividing lines are reportedly being drawn in Mogadishu. An Ethiopian intervention may in the works, we are told. The Ambassador and Special Envoy will reach out to both Gedi and Yusuf to urge restraint, respect for the Transitional Federal Charter, and focus on the transitional tasks at hand. End Summary.

Arrest of Chief Justice

¶2. (C) The Chief Justice of the TFG Supreme Court, Yusuf Ali Harun (Dir/Issa) and his deputy, Justice Mohamed Nur, were arrested and detained on various charges, allegedly including corruption and embezzlement, early on September 22. The arrest of the Chief Justice, a long time close associate of TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf, took many by surprise. Yusuf allegedly order the arrests because Harun had refused to arrest Gedi over the disappearance of millions of dollars recently given to the TFG by Saudi Arabia. Gedi presumably converted the Chief Justice to his side, which lead the President to arrest and detain the Chief Justice.

Firing of Attorney General

¶3. (C) In a tit-for-tat move, the Prime Minister removed the Attorney General and his deputy who had carried out the President's orders to arrest the Chief Justice. Having already consolidated support within his sub sub clan (the Warsangeli), the Prime Minister is reported to have met September 23 with Abgal traditional leaders and elders to gain broader clan support. Gedi reportedly admitted past mistakes and shortcomings and asked the clan to rally around his leadership. Abgal senior leaders agreed to do so, and they met on September 24 with President Yusuf to press for retention of Gedi as Prime Minister. The President listened but provided no assurances to the Abgal. However, among his grievances against Gedi were poor performance and misappropriation of funding.

Mediation

14. (C) Gedi also met late into the night of September 23 with General Gabre, the Ethiopian "proconsul" for Somalia resident in Mogadishu, and General Darawish, Yusuf's fellow clansman and Chief of Security, to broker some sort of agreement or truce between the two competing factions. We are not aware of the outcome of this meeting. We are told there are indications Mogadishu is being divided along a "green line." Darood/Majerteen and others aligned with the President are moving out of the area of the Global Hotel toward the Villa Somalia. TFG forces allegedly are distancing themselves from Abgal neighborhoods. Gedi went to Baidoa on September 23 and Yusuf was reportedly going to Baidoa on September 24. The assumption of many was that they were being convoked for a meeting with an unnamed high-level Ethiopian official or officials in order to bridge the divide between the two.

Charter Deadlines

15. (C) Tensions between Yusuf and Gedi are coming to a head in part because of looming dates stemming from the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). The Charter says that the government has two and a half years in which to draft a constitution and commence with federation of the country. Yusuf claims that date will be reached on November 12, and he and his staff have been signaling for some time they intend to get rid of Gedi. Others have moved the date for announced change in government even closer. The Somalia Ambassador to Kenya Mohamed Ali Nur ("Americo"), a close relative and ally of Gedi, told us that Yusuf intends to remove Gedi on October 12 or sooner (Reftel). UNDP has noted that October 4 will mark the end of Yusuf's third year in power, and he may use the occasion to announce a change in government for the remaining two years of the transition. Gedi, on the other hand, views the requirements of the Charter quite differently. According to Gedi's calculations the Parliament

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approved the list of the constitutional commission only after the Parliament to Baidoa in May 2006, and therefore Gedi is arguing he has until October or November 2008 to produce results.

Comment and Actions

16. (C) We do not discount the possibility that factional infighting and raw calculations over power and money (in addition to the Saudi money, a petroleum bill before Parliament is a particular source of tension) may ultimately lead directly to open conflict between forces aligned to Yusuf and Gedi. Yusuf may try to remove Gedi and Gedi may not go willingly. However, our understanding of the Ethiopian intentions is that Gedi and Yusuf both remain "their men." Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles has longstanding ties with both men, and in the case of Gedi familial bonds, that they would not be willing or able to replace easily. Consequently, we view it more likely that Ethiopia will force a truce between the two, just as Foreign Minister Seyoum did in November 2006 with the tripartite agreement in Baidoa between Yusuf, Gedi, and then Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden.

17. (C) As reported in Reftel, we will continue to press Gedi and Yusuf to work cooperatively to build on the remaining momentum from the National Reconciliation Congress and direct their attentions to the transition. We are making clear in no uncertain terms that intra-governmental violence and extremism is just as counterproductive as such forces directed against the TFG, and that it is neither in Gedi's nor Yusuf's personal interest to play brinksmanship while the transitional process demands their full attention. Special Envoy Yates, who is in Addis Ababa September 24-27 to press these points with the GOE, has not cleared on this message.
RANNEBERGER